

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GUATEM 03196 312217Z
ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 AID-05
EB-08 AGRE-00 IO-13 /066 W
-----028931 011004Z /13
R 312139Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0454

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SPOP
SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL
PROBLEMS - POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION

REF: STATE 107370

1. ON MAY 25, AMBASSADOR, ACCOMPANIED BY AID DIRECTOR,
CALLED ON MINISTER OF HEALTH TO RAISE CONCERNS MENTIONED IN
REFTEL. A PAPER WAS LEFT WITH THE MINISTER WHICH DISCUSSED
US INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING A DIALOGUE ON POPULATION AND FOOD
MATTERS AND RELATED GUATEMALA SITUATION TO WORLD-WIDE PICTURE.

2. MINISTER WAS VERY RECEPTIVE TO THE APPROACH AND EXPRESSED
HIS WILLINGNESS TO MAINTAIN DIALOGUE, POINTING OUT, HOWEVER,
THAT CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT ON JULY 1, WILL BRING CHANGES IN
TOP LEVEL PERSONNEL IN THE MINISTRY. AT THE SAME TIME,
HE PROFESSED TO BE CLOSE FRIEND OF PRESIDENT-ELECT AND SAID HE
WOULD MENTION SUBJECT TO HIM.

3. MINISTER THEN DIGRESSED TO THEME HE HAS PRESENTED BEFORE
IN PRIOR DISCUSSIONS WITH AID STAFF ON POPULATION MATTERS TO
EFFECT THAT OPPOSITION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH MADE IT VERY
DIFFICULT FOR GOG TO ENUNCIATE A VORMAL POLICY OR ADOPT FORMAL
FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS. HE RECOMMENDED THAT A STRONG PRIVATE
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EFFORT BE MOUNTED WHICH COULD BE SUPPORTED BY GOG WITH ASSIS-
TANCE FROM AID AND UNFPA. AMBASSADOR RAISED THE POINT THAT
OTHER LA COUNTRIES HAVE ANNOUNCED FORMAL POLICIES, PROBABLY
IN THE FACE OF OFFICIAL CHURCH OPPOSITION, BECAUSE OF THE
SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM. WHILE GUATEMALA IS NOT FACING TO
THE SAME DEGREE THE POPULATION PRESSURES SOME OTHER COUNTRIES
ARE EXPERIENCING, TIME IS RUNNING OUT. MINISTER AGREED BUT

RETURNED TO THEME OF PRIVATE APPROACH BECAUSE "PRESIDENT
WOULD NEVER ACCEPT AN OFFICIAL FP PROGRAM."

4. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION OF CURRENT AID POPULATION ACTIVITIES
(WHICH ARE SUPPORTING PRIVATE FP EFFORTS), AMBASSADOR CLOSED
BY REITERATING USG'S WILLINGNESS TO BE OF ASSISTANCE.

5. COMMENT: BEST COURSE AT THIS TIME IS TO AWAIT INAUGURATION
OF NEW GOVERNMENT. WHILE WE HAVE NO SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF
POSSIBLE ATTITUDES TOWARD FP BY THE LUCAS PEOPLE, WE BELIEVE
THAT RECEPTIVITY WILL PROBABLY BE BETTER.
ANDREWS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POPULATION, PRODUCTION, FAMILY PLANNING, FOODS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GUATEM03196
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780229-0122
Format: TEL
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978054/aaaaadcb.tel
Line Count: 74
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0c378c9a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 107370
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2636298
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL PROBLEMS - POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION
TAGS: SPOP, SOCI, GT, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0c378c9a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014